

About a year after SFC Scott Smith died in an explosion in Iraq in July of 2006, his wife, Lynn Smith of Frenchtown, learned that not all of his remains had been included in his funeral. In her grief, she sought an answer from the Pentagon: What had happened to his remains?

After years of persistent questioning, she learned from a military official that her husband's remains had been cremated, mixed with medical waste, and unceremoniously sent to a Virginia landfill.

Earlier this year Lynn asked me to help to find out whether other soldiers had suffered her husband's fate. After months of delay, the Pentagon has finally revealed that at least 274 soldiers were desecrated in this way.

I suspect that the true figure is much higher. The Pentagon tells me that counting the full number of soldiers dishonored is impractical because it would require "a massive effort." I am outraged. We proudly spend tens of millions of dollars and undertake every effort to find the remains of missing soldiers, even those that have been missing in southeast Asia for decades, yet the Pentagon cannot search their files to learn what happened to the remains of Americans who died recently?

At a very minimum, Congress should hold formal hearings and condemn the Air Force's mishandling of the remains and take steps to repair the dishonor to soldiers and disrespect to families. They also should establish an advisory panel, including families, to help prevent this sort of scandal from ever happening again.

## Ensure the Safety of Your Food During Electrical Outages

As winter approaches, the odds rise that you could suffer an electrical outage. If you do, please take precautions to ensure the safety of your food:

- Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. In general, an unopened refrigerator will keep food safe for about 4 hours. An unopened, full freezer will

remain safe for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if half-full).

- Pack containers together in the freezer to help them stay cold longer.
- Use an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer to help you determine the safety of your food.

The USDA offers further guidance and tips [on its website](#) .

### Need a Passport?

A valid, up-to-date U.S. passport or special frequent traveler card is required for U.S. citizens travelling abroad by air, including to Canada and Mexico. A passport is also necessary for [most land and sea border crossings](#)

. If you are considering a trip abroad, I recommend that you obtain a passport to make your trip as easy as possible. First-time applicants can obtain a passport from the U.S. Department of State by completing

[the application form available online](#)

. You will need to submit the completed forms and necessary identification documentation in person to an acceptance facility or passport agency. Many local post offices offer these services. You can find your nearest acceptance facility or passport agency

[on the State Department's search page](#)

.

If you already have a passport, [you can renew by mail](#) . As always, if you have any difficulty applying for a passport or dealing with any federal agency, please do not hesitate to contact me for help by calling 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658).

Sincerely,

Rush Holt  
Member of Congress